

UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

IN REPLY REFER TO:

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Oct. 27, 1950

Dear Josh,

I am almost ashamed to write but here goes anyway.

I am enclosing the suggestions for preparing research proposals. There is no real necessity to be unduly conservative in your application since at the moment, we have quite adequate funds available. We very often buy quite major items of equipment, the title usually remaining with the university except for the very expensive items such as x-ray machines. In general, we do not like to assume obligations for parts of the salary of regular staff members although we do pay the salaries of research assistant which might be hired specifically for the project.

If you care to do so, you might send your tentative proposal to me at my home address so I could examine it and make any suggestions I might care to. (How's that for a sentence?)

In regard to the manuscripts, I have been spending what little time I have had available on them. I am reasonably sure they will be in your hands in another week. I apologize for the delay but life has been a rat race lately. This weekend is out for I must go to Ithaca. Cornell and the AEC are debating the fate of yours truly at the moment. I have told the commission that I am ultimately returning to Cornell. They approached Cornell re. an extension of leave through second term next year which would permit me to continue until next fall. This is the subject of the debate. Probably, there will be a compromise of sorts but it appears quite likely that I will retain some connection here until next fall. I would rather like to do so for several reasons.

I don't know whether I discussed the situation with respect to research support of investigators who politically at some time or other were on the liberal side of the fence a bit too far to permit clearance. I have been fighting this battle with the people here, with especial reference to Muller, and I believe I am winning it. Unless the election should result in wide republican gains giving them control of the senate and house with consequent changes in the joint atomic energy committee, I feel sure that clearance or any ~~other~~ political background will not be a factor so long as the project is entirely of an unclassified nature. This has not, unfortunately, been true in the past, thanks in no small part to such outstanding senators as Wisconsin's McCarthy and Iowa's Hickenlooper. The constant threat posed by such asses serves to intimidate high officials, sometimes to the extent where formal policy is ignored for the sake of avoiding an issue which might serve as ammunition for such senators.

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Ironically, I just received a letter from Muller about this. Equally, ironically, when discussing this whole question with Smyth the other day, his secretary interrupted the conference by bringing in the press release about McCarthy's latest blast about communist infiltration into the scientific corps of the AEC. To show the total lack of scruples of the man, only one of the nine mentioned ~~has~~ has any connection with the AEC at this time *and must have not bud for several years, some say,*

Enough of this. But it serves to show some of the rather frustrating and time consuming headaches one encounters in this job. It is fun for awhile and I think I have done some service to the scientific community in a very devious, indirect way perhaps, but I can't see spending the rest of one's life in such a position. And if one stayed here very long, I'm afraid he'd have to for nobody would hire you.

I don't have your last letter here so can't go into the discussion re the Atomic Weapons Effect matter. I am appreciative of your essentially supporting opinion however.

Incidentally, another consideration making an AEC contract somewhat desirable is the present policy, which may or may not be desirable, of requesting deferment from selective service of personnel associated with such contracts.

Guess I have rambled on enough for this time. Please consider parts of this letter off the record. I shall try to get the papers to you soon.

Greetings to Esther,



Max